

Minutes of the Human Rights Commission meeting

February 15, 2023

Present: Alton McCray, Megan Paik, Booker Bush, Angela D'Souza

Absent: Chelsea Sunday Kline, Susan McDonald-Bolanos, Dianna Stallone

Meeting was called to order at 6:11 p.m.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Minutes

Community Gardens Equity

Commissioners drafted and approved the following statement to be shared at future meetings with the Parks and Recreation Commission:

The Human Rights Commission unanimously endorsed (in November 2022 and January 2023) the racial equity statement of the Northampton Community Gardens written by Robin MacEwan, Rachel Ehrlich, and Ellie Cook. The values and objectives of their equity and sustainability statement align with the Commission's priorities to uphold the rights and dignity of all humans in their access and use of public spaces, to denounce discrimination, and to educate about and meaningfully support equity and inclusion.

We endorse this work and will continue to promote open access to the Community Gardens.

If we can further assist with this process, please contact us at northamptonhrc@gmail.com.

The commissioners considered forming a subcommittee to review and continue editing a longer statement supporting equity in all public spaces.

Slavery and Christianity History Project

Alton presented about the event planned on February 26 by College Church. Jim Nash will make opening remarks at the event, the first by the church to celebrate Black History month. Commissioners Alton asked the members to attend and promote the event through social media, and Megan will email Councilors Nash and Perry on Alton's behalf to request that an announcement about the event be made during the February 16 council meeting.

Resolution to Create a Commission to Study Racialized Harms

Megan will attend the public comments of the City Council meeting (February 16) in which this resolution will receive a final vote. She asked members to consider applying to serve on the new commission. She asked if commissioners would like to keep this item on the agenda for future months.

Priorities for 2023 and Planning Subcommittee Update

Angela, Alton, and Megan met on February 13 to brainstorm ideas for events and programs during this calendar year. Alton proposed requesting a budget from the mayor's office for such public functions; Megan wants to wait for indication of broader interest and community partnerships before sharing a proposal with the mayor. She will reach out to Greenfield and Amherst Human Rights Commissions to tap interest in regional collaborations around the 75th anniversary of the International Declaration of Human Rights. Angela suggested partnering with Smith College art museum colleagues and using its facilities for educational programming in late summer or a possible series in December.

Select Committee for Study of Barriers to Service on Boards and Commissions

The Committee's work will officially end in April. Megan asked members to appear at meetings in the interim to support specific recommendations for changes to the recruitment and appointment processes. The committee is still open to receiving survey responses and will be sending out the survey link again to active members. Videos of their meetings are available online.

New Business

Two members' terms will end in June. Megan encouraged everyone to reach out to interested candidates and will assist with the onboarding of future applicants. The next meeting is anticipated to be at 6:00 p.m. on March 22. In future months, the Zoom session will continue to open half an hour before and after the scheduled meeting period.

The meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.